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**CC:**  
**Subject:** Fw: (Updated article) Scranton Times-Tribune (12-31) EPA: Dimock water supplies 'merit further consideration'

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**Subject:** (Updated article) Scranton Times-Tribune (12-31) EPA: Dimock water supplies 'merit further consideration'

EPA: Dimock water supplies 'merit further investigation'  
By Laura Legere (Staff Writer)  
Published: December 31, 2011

Read more: <http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/epa-dimock-water-supplies-merit-further-investigation-1.1251334#ixzz1i8GLXglb>

Federal environmental regulators are reopening their review of Dimock Twp. water supplies after recently released tests of the water wells taken by a natural gas drilling contractor were found to "merit further investigation."

Officials with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were in Dimock Thursday and Friday to visit residents whose water supplies were found by state regulators to have been tainted with methane from Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.'s Marcellus Shale drilling operations.

After a preliminary review of results from water tests taken earlier by the state, Cabot and other outside firms, the EPA wrote to the residents on Dec. 2 to say the information they had gathered "does not indicate that the well water presents an immediate health threat to users."

But in an information sheet provided to residents during visits this week, the EPA wrote that it "has recently received additional Cabot data from residents that merit further investigation." The EPA is now "concerned about" potential gaps in water sampling and test results, the number of water supplies potentially affected, if residents that need them have alternate sources of fresh drinking water, and if residents have any more data to share.

Read the fact sheet [HERE](#)

The agency is also surveying residents about the depth, age and history of their private drinking water wells.

The information will be used by the EPA to decide what steps, if any, the agency will take next in its investigation, including possibly taking its own samples from the residents' drinking water wells, according to the fact sheet.

A Cabot spokesman said the company will provide the EPA with all the data it has collected over several years.

"If there are data gaps, they exist due to lack of access, not lack of trying," spokesman George Stark said. "Cabot is confident that the water meets federal drinking water standards, and is committed to installing state-of-the-art treatment systems and resolving this matter."

EPA officials first visited the Dimock residents on Nov. 10 to gather written documentation of water tests taken by other organizations and to speak to residents who remain concerned about the quality of their drinking water.

Federal officials wrote to the families to say the tests showed no immediate health threat on the day after replacement bulk and bottled water deliveries, provided to the families by Cabot, were stopped with state approval.

But Cabot test results of the residents' water supplies that had been marked confidential in litigation between the company and 11 of the affected families were released publicly in early December, after the EPA performed its preliminary review. Those tests, taken in August and September by a Cabot contractor, showed elevated levels of metals and bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, a plasticizer commonly called DEHP. They also detected other chemicals including glycols, which are used in antifreeze, surfactants, and 2-methoxyethanol, a solvent, in the drinking water wells.

Victoria Switzer, one of the affected Dimock residents, was visited Thursday evening by EPA officials.

"Something in the water disturbed them," she said. "They were very concerned about what they were seeing."

Efforts to reach Trish Taylor, EPA Region 3 Community Involvement Coordinator, were unsuccessful Friday.

The industry group Energy in Depth, which touted the EPA's preliminary finding on Dec. 2, scolded the agency Friday for overstepping its regulatory authority in a matter over which the state has jurisdiction.

Oil and gas drilling in Pennsylvania is primarily regulated by the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Energy in Depth spokesman John Krohn said the EPA's efforts this week are different than the earlier review he praised because "they're now actively going through the process of gaining new information" and have indicated the possibility of taking water tests.

"That changes the dynamics," he said.

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Read more: <http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/epa-dimock-water-supplies-merit-further-investigation-1.1251334#ixzz1i8G4Rs1f>

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